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AN APPENDIX TO AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE and DESIGN OF Chriſt's Temptation IN THE WILDERNESS.

CONTAINING,

Some farther OBSERVATIONS upon this SUBJECT, and an ANSWER to OBJECTIONS.

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APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

Some farther OBSERVATIONS upon the ſubject of the preceding INQUIRY, and an anſwer to objections.

FULLY ſenſible as I was from the beginning, that the argument of the *Inquiry* was repugnant to the ſtrongeſt prepoſſeſſions of every denomination of Chriſtians; yet a belief of it's importance induced me to ſubmit it to public examination: not without ſome hope, that, in caſe it was well ſupported, it might gradually make it's way into candid and ingenuous minds; or that, if it was ill-grounded, ſome friend to truth would correct my miſtakes, and place the ſubject in a juſter light. The ſucceſs which the *Inquiry* has met with, has exceeded my expectations. It is indebted to many for their candour [a]; and to ſome who

 are

[a] The learned and judicious Spanheim, at the ſame time that he pleads for the literal interpretation, recommends candour

are univerſally ranked amongſt the moſt capable judges of the ſubject, for their approbation. This has incouraged me to review it, and to attempt to remove the objections which have been urged againſt it; ſtill wiſhing it may undergo an impartial ſcrutiny by the publick, whatever be the iſſue. I have uſed great diligence in collecting the objections, to which it was thought to be liable. And though moſt of them are in ſome degree either obviated or anſwered in the firſt edition of the *Inquiry*, and, I hope, more fully in the preſent [b]; nevertheleſs, it may not be improper to enter on a farther diſcuſſion of ſome of the moſt material ones, as it may lead us to place the anſwers in a different light, and to make ſome farther obſervations on the general ſubject.

I.

But firſt of all I would take notice, that the publick has been referred to Dr. Clarke's diſcourſes on Chriſt's temptation [c], as containing

dour towards thoſe who rejected it, from theſe two conſiderations: Quum nec res fidei ſit, nec Scriptura id ἀυτολεξεὶ definiat. Dubia Evangel. dub. 55. p. 247. See alſo p. 244.

[b] The notes added to this edition, would have been inſerted in the appendix, if they had not been ſo numerous, as to make it neceſſary to inſert them in the *Inquiry*, for the eaſe and convenience of the reader.

[c] They are the 93d and 94th Sermons, vol. 1. p. 585, 591. fol. ed.

ing a ſatisfactory ſolution of the difficulties attending the literal interpretation. It will therefore be neceſſary to examine thoſe diſcourſes; nor will it be improper to ſubjoin a few obſervations on what Dr. Benſon or others have wrote more lately upon the ſame ſubject, and with the ſame view.

With regard to Dr. Clarke, I readily allow, that ſuch were the abilities and learning of that celebrated writer, as eminently to qualify him for the taſk he undertook. And had the literal interpretation of this paſſage of Scripture been capable of a juſt defence, it would have been ſucceſsfully defended by this accompliſh'd ſcholar and critic. If he has not ſucceeded, we may fairly preſume, that the fault was in the cauſe, rather than the advocate.

The doctor begins with obſerving [d], that *the hiſtory of our Saviour's temptation, is a portion of Scripture, in which there are ſeveral difficulties, that deſerve particular explication.* And then ſets himſelf to explain the following ones: 1ſt, *Why our Saviour, whom the Scripture elſewhere declares to have been tempted in all points, as we are, only without ſin; is yet by the evangeliſts recorded, as having been tempted only at this particular time.* 2dly, *Why our Saviour continued ſo long in the ſolitary retirement of a*

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[d] P. 585.

deſert place, and why he faſted through all that ſpace of forty days. 3dly, *Why our Saviour, who had power over unclean ſpirits, and could caſt out devils at his pleaſure; was yet pleaſed to ſubmit himſelf and condeſcend ſo far, as to be tempted at all by the enemy.* 4thly, *Why the tempter would at all aſſault our Lord, or what advantage he could poſſibly hope to gain over him.* 5thly, and laſtly, *Since we read no more in the Goſpels, of Chriſt's being tempted after this; how and in what ſenſe, it is ſaid by St. Luke, at the concluſion of this hiſtory of our Lord's temptation, that the tempter departed from him, only for a ſeaſon.*

Theſe are *all* the difficulties which Dr. Clarke ſaw fit to propoſe and examine. Whether ſome of them do really belong to the ſubject; and whether the reſt are fully ſolved; I ſhall leave to others to determine. Let us ſuppoſe, (what many however would very unwillingly grant) that he has removed all the objections here enumerated; there are many others which he has ſuffered to paſs unnoticed. He did not obſerve or has paſſed over in ſilence moſt, if not all thoſe which are urged in the Inquiry [e]. Now to *overlook* a difficulty, and to

[e] Indeed the 4th difficulty which the doctor undertakes to explain, correſponds in ſome degree with the firſt objection in the

to *remove* it, are things widely different. It may be ſaid, perhaps, that thoſe objections which to others ſeem very conſiderable, appeared to him too trifling to be conſidered. And I acknowledge candour would oblige us to preſume this to be the caſe, with regard to a writer of ſuch ſuperior abilities, and ſuch unqueſtionable freedom and fairneſs as Dr. Clarke, if there were not certain proof of the contrary. It appears from his other writings, that he judged one of the objections to the hiſtory of Chriſt's temptation, which he has omitted in his ſermons, and which is urged in the *Inquiry*, to be *unanſwerable*, I mean that drawn from the *devil's ſhewing Chriſt all the kingdoms of the world*; which he explains by ſaying, *he made him a repreſentation of them.*[f]. And thus this juſtly celebrated writer, like moſt other writers of inferior note upon the ſubject of Chriſt's temptation, though he undertook to vindicate the literal interpretation; found himſelf under a neceſſity, in one inſtance at leaſt, of receding from it.

The world is juſt favoured with a work of the

the Inquiry, p. 3. But the doctor entirely overlooks the main circumſtance, the abſurdity of the devil's aſſaulting Chriſt *in an open and viſible manner*. This circumſtance is likewiſe dropt, when he returns an anſwer to his third difficulty, by miſapplying Heb. ii. 14—18. ch. iv. 15. See the Inquiry, p. 12—18. 2d. ed.

[f] Paraphraſe on Mat. iv. 8. and Luke iv. 5.

the late reverend and learned Dr. Benſon [g]; and it may reaſonably be expected, that ſome notice ſhould be taken of what ſuch a writer has advanced upon the ſubject under conſideration; eſpecially as he has treated it in an elaborate manner [h]. He rejects the ſuppoſition of it's being a dream or viſion [i]; and affirms, that *the evangeliſts ſeem, plainly, to have repreſented all theſe things as hiſtorical facts* [k]; *adding, that he was inclined to underſtand this part of the four Goſpels, as literal, hiſtorical, truth; or an account of what actually happened.* [k]. We find, however, that at firſt ſetting out, he began to feel ſome *doubt* upon his mind; for thus he expreſſes himſelf with regard to one circumſtance of the hiſtory, viz. the manner of Satan's appearance to Chriſt: *He ſeems to have appeared unto Jeſus, in a viſible manner, at leaſt in* VISION [l]. As the doctor proceeds, new difficulties come in his way; and he not only doubts, but *denies* the truth, and even the poſſibility, of the literal interpretation. *It is impoſſible*, (ſays he) *from thence* (that is, *from the top of the higheſt mountain upon earth*) *to ſee the length, breadth, and full extent, of any one large kingdom, much leſs all the kingdoms of this world, and all the ſplendor and glory of them* [m]. And notwith-

[g] *The Hiſtory of the life of Chriſt.*

[h] Chapter 2. [i] P. 36. [k] P. 37. [l] P. 32. [m] P. 39.

notwithſtanding his own inclination to underſtand all the temptations as literal hiſtorical truth, he honeſtly confeſſes, *As to this part of the repreſentation, there ſeems to be a neceſſity of having recourſe to viſion; or rather, to a fictitious ſcene, worked up by diabolical power and art* [n]. Nay, the doctor lays down a rule of interpretation, which (in my apprehenſion) deſtroys all that he has advanced in favour of the common hypotheſis. His rule is this, viz. *we ſhould look upon every thing to be literally, or hiſtorically true; but where there are ſome circumſtances to determine us to interpret a paſſage, in a figurative manner; and eſpecially where the literal ſenſe would lead us into manifeſt abſurdity* [o]. Is it not abſurd, that is, contrary to reaſon and experience, to ſuppoſe that the devil can *hurry men through the air* [p], or ſo much *as appear to them in a viſible manner* [q]? Were it not for the prejudices of education, we ſhould rank theſe things amongſt the moſt glaring repugnancies to the conſtitution of the univerſe, and as a very groſs (though undeſigned) impeachment of the wiſdom of it's ſovereign author and lord.

I will take notice of one thing more in the doctor's performance, becauſe he ſeems to lay much ſtreſs upon it; though it has been already conſidered in the *Inquiry*. I refer to the general

[n] P. 38. [o] P. 39. [p] P. 35. [q] P. 32.

general reaſon he aſſigns for adhering to the literal interpretation, *To ſay the truth, our Lord's reſiſting theſe temptations, in viſion only, would not, in my opinion, have been ſo much to his honour, ſo glorious an example to his diſciples, nor ſuch an illuſtrious evidence, that he was ſuperior to all the temptations of the devil* [r]. Soon after he adds, *It ſeems to me altogether worthy of our Lord's high and ſacred character, to manifeſt that the devil could not, by any temptation whatever, prevail with Jeſus to commit the leaſt ſin; even when the devil was permitted to take his own way, place him in what ſituation he pleaſed, and attack him, in ſuch manner, and in ſuch circumſtances, as might give his temptations all poſſible weight or force.* Whether, ſuppoſing the ſcenes to be viſionary, they conſtituted any proper trial, is a point conſidered elſewhere [s]: here let us examine, whether upon the doctor's hypotheſis, the temptations of the devil had *all poſſible force*, or any force at all. In explaining the firſt temptation, he tells us, *our Lord was not ignorant, who the perſon was that accoſted him* [t]. Now if Chriſt knew Satan from the beginning, this circumſtance, our moſt candid adverſaries allow, would diminiſh the force of all his temptations. With reſpect to the third and

[r] P. 37. [s] Appendix No. V.
[t] Dr. Benſon's life of Chriſt, p. 34.

and laſt temptation in particular, Dr. Benſon calls it *the greateſt of them all* [t]; and yet according to this learned writer, Chriſt not only knew who made him the offer of all kingdoms of the world, but alſo that the devil's claim to the diſpoſal of them was *arrogant, uſurped*, AND INTIRELY GROUNDLESS AND VAIN [u]. Now even to the warmeſt Advocate for the literal ſcheme, I might venture to appeal, whether there was the *leaſt* force in ſuch a temptation? The Doctor admits, that Chriſt knew the devil's claim to the diſpoſal of the world, and conſequently the devil's promiſe of it to him, to be *intirely groundleſs*, and therefore that it could not in any degree be fulfilled. And yet as if Chriſt had known the very contrary to be true, the Doctor exclaims, *to be tempted, at once, with all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them! muſt have been ſuch a temptation, as it can hardly enter into the heart of man, to conceive the prodigious and almoſt irreſiſtible force thereof* [w]. I own, I cannot diſcern the tempting force, much leſs the *prodigious* and *almoſt irreſiſtible* force, of an offer of *nothing*; or, which is the ſame, of ſomething which the perſon who makes it, is known to be utterly unable to make good. The meaneſt ſlave of vice would

[t] P. 38. [u] P. 41. [w] P. 40.

turn from ſuch a temptation with ſcorn. Was it then by reſiſting aſſaults of this nature, that Chriſt was to manifeſt his ſuperiority to all the temptations of the devil, to advance his own honour, and to ſet a glorious example to his diſciples! And was it for the ſake of ſuch triumphs, that the laws of nature were now ſuſpended, and all thoſe wonderful ſcenes which the Doctor ſo affectingly deſcribes, *preſented before our Lord's eyes*, by a ſeries of miracles?

Beſides Dr. Benſon, Dr. Macknight has lately appeared in defence of the hiſtory of Chriſt's temptation, in the literal ſenſe of it. The reaſonings of this gentleman in his *Commentary* upon it, I have carefully examined in my obſervations on the ſeveral paſſages, as they occurred in the *Inquiry*. And becauſe nothing ought to paſs unregarded; which is advanced by this able and judicious writer; I would inform the reader, that in his *Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory* [x], after taking notice of my *Inquiry*, he affirms, "That the literal ſenſe of the hiſtory of the temptation, is agreeable to the repreſentation which the Scriptures have given us of the agency of evil Spirits." On this paſſage, I would make the following remarks. 1. The *Inquiry* does not controvert the agency of the devil and other evil Spirits in tempting man-

[x] P. 173, in the note.

mankind [y]. 2. Nor does the allowing the temptation of Chriſt in the wilderneſs to be a viſion, contradict the common doctrine concerning the agency of evil Spirits in propoſing temptations. On the contrary, the viſion is framed agreeably to this hypotheſis; the image of the great tempter being uſed as the ſymbol and emblem of temptation [y]. 3. In order to ſubvert the principles laid down in the *Inquiry*, it is neceſſary to eſtabliſh, not ſome agency of Satan in tempting mankind in the general courſe of things, but the correſpondence of ſuch a general agency to the literal ſenſe of this hiſtory, which repreſents him as *appearing to Chriſt in a viſible form, converſing with him openly, and conveying or accompanying him from place to place in a ſenſible manner.* But this is a point our learned author has not attempted to prove.

Let others judge of the force of the objections againſt the literal interpretation; with reſpect to myſelf, having in vain ſought for a ſatisfactory ſolution of them, from thoſe moſt capable of affording it; I ſtill find myſelf under a neceſſity of looking out for ſome different explication. And none appearing to me ſo

 probable

[y] See the Inquiry, the 1ſt. ed. p. 63, note [r]. and p. 47, note [n]. —2d. ed. p. 81, note [n]. and p. 64, note [b].

probable as that ſuggeſted in the *Inquiry*, I will attempt to clear it from objections.

II.

It has been objected, " That if this part of " the Goſpel be only the hiſtory of a viſion, " the ſame may be affirmed concerning every " other part of the Goſpel. The whole ac- " count of our Saviour's *miracles* in particular, " may be nothing more than a narrative of ſo " many viſions."

This objection manifeſtly proceeds upon this falſe principle, viz. " That there is juſt the ſame reaſon, for affirming the miracles of Chriſt to be the hiſtory of what was tranſacted only in viſion, as there is to affirm the ſame concerning his temptations in the wilderneſs." If there be a juſt diſtinction in the two caſes, the objection falls to the ground. It has been ſhewn, that neither the *nature* of Chriſt's temptations did admit, nor the *end* propoſed by them require, an outward tranſaction; and alſo that the hiſtorians have clearly *intimated* by many *circumſtances* of the relation, that they were viſionary repreſentations; and that they have even *poſitively aſſerted* them to be ſuch. But this reaſoning does not affect the miracles of the Goſpel: for they are all, in their own *nature* poſſible to the power to which they are aſcribed; the *end* propoſed by them, the con-

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viction of mankind, required an actual exhibition and performance; all the *circumſtances* attending them, the reaſonings from them, and the effects they produced, farther ſhew that they were real facts; and the evangeliſts have *affirmed* that they were performed openly and in the moſt publick manner. Thus all the arguments uſed to prove Chriſt's temptations to have been viſions, are ſo far from warranting the ſame concluſion with regard to his miracles, that they demonſtrate the contrary, and prove them to be real facts.

I moſt readily allow, that the literal ſenſe of all authors ought never to be departed from without ſome juſt reaſon or neceſſity; and that very great injury has been done to the Scripture, by making thoſe parts of it ſymbolical, emblematical, or allegorical, which were deſigned to be underſtood literally. This is ſetting aſide the genuine word of God, and ſubſtituting in the room of it the infinitely various fictions of the human imagination. With this fault, the antient writers [a] of the Chriſtian church have been frequently, and juſtly charged.

[a] The *Chriſtian Fathers*, in allegorizing the ſcripture, ſeem to have copied (as *Philo* and other learned *Jews* before them had done) the method of the *Greeks*, in explaining their myſteries. See Le Clerc's Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 24. and compare Dr. Lightfoot's works, Vol. I. p. 373.

Origen, and (in their younger years) Jerome and Auguſtin, though they did not abſolutely reject the literal ſenſe of Scripture; yet led men to neglect and undervalue it as low and trivial, by the preference they gave to myſtical interpretations. But may we not be guilty of equal abſurdity, and do as great prejudice to the Scripture, by *adhering* to the letter unreaſonably, as by unreaſonably *departing* from it? When our Saviour ſpeaks of *eating his fleſh*, and *drinking his blood*; are we to underſtand him literally, as the Jews did? He himſelf has told us, that his *words are ſpirit*, to be interpreted figuratively or ſpiritually. On other occaſions he uſes the like ſtyle, and calls himſelf *the door of the ſheep, the bread which came down from heaven, and the true vine*; leaving it to common ſenſe to explain his meaning. In a word, there is no book contains a greater variety of matter than the Bible. And though many have pleaded, "That the viſions related "in Scripture, occur only in the *prophetical* "books, not in the *hiſtorical*"; yet it appears from the inſtances cited in the Inquiry [b], (to which many more might be added,) that even the

[b] Firſt ed. p. 20, 21, 29, 52, 54, 56, 57, 63. — 2d. ed. p. 29, 30, 31, 44, 70, 73, 74, 81. See alſo 1 Kings xxii. 19—22. cited below, N° III. note [d]

the *hiſtorical* books relate parables, fables[c], revelations or mental illuminations and viſions, as well as plain doctrines, and outward events. And the *prophetical* books, not excepting Ezekiel, and the revelation of St. John, have ſome intermixture of real facts with the hiſtory of viſions and revelations. Now all theſe things ought to be underſtood according to their reſpective natures. By a diligent and impartial uſe of our underſtandings, we may eaſily diſtinguiſh between things that differ. The relation itſelf or the declaration of the hiſ-

 torian,

[c] *The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them, and they ſaid*, &c. Judges ix. 8—15. Now to borrow the reaſoning ſo often employed againſt the *Inquiry*, " *We have as little* " *reaſon to affirm, from the ſtyle of the ſacred writer, and the* " *manner of his expreſſions*, that this is a parable, as we have to " affirm that the miracles of Chriſt were mere parables: both " are equally deſcribed as real facts, without any the leaſt *in-* " *timation* of the contrary." But who does not ſee the abſurdity of this reaſoning? Experience informs us, that trees neither walk nor ſpeak. And the ſame experience as certainly informs us, that the devil does never appear viſibly to mankind, never converſes with them in an open manner, neither tranſports them through the air, nor accompanies or conducts them from the country to the city, or from the city to the country. In both caſes therefore the nature of the relation points out the neceſſity of a figurative interpretation. It is objected, " That we " are ignorant of the powers of ſuperior beings, and know no- " thing of the *other* world." But we are not unacquainted with the laws and orders of *this* world; we know by experience, that they never are violated; and by reaſon are aſſured they never can be violated, but by the great ruler of the world.

torian, if attended to, will preſerve us from miſtake. To diſtinguiſh properly, is the buſineſs of the critic. And to plead (as *all* interpreters do occaſionally) for ſome figurative modes of ſpeech; is not to convert every thing into figure and allegory; unleſs the reaſonings made uſe of are as applicable to the whole, as to particular parts of Scripture.

III.

It has been objected, "That ſuppoſing the "temptation of Chriſt to be a viſion, God "could not be the author of it; inaſmuch as "it contains ſuch repreſentations of the power "of the devil in making Chriſt an offer of the "world, as are not agreeable to his real "nature."

This objection, if it proves any thing, would prove too much: for it affects the credit of all viſions, which are mere *deceptions*, having no exiſtence out of the mind of the prophet [d].

Beſides,

[d] This is the caſe, even when the images of a viſion are types or repreſentative figures of real objects, and give a juſt picture of them; as when *Saul ſaw Ananias in viſion.* Acts ix. 12. The appearance or repreſentation was fictitious and deluſive, though an object perfectly correſpondent to it exiſted in nature. But very frequently the viſionary repreſentation has no correſponding object in nature; or if it bears a reſemblance to real beings in ſome reſpects, it differs from them in others, and is not framed ſo much with a view to truth and nature, as to conſtitute

Beſides, it is of no importance whether the images of a viſion are borrowed from nature, or whether they vary from it wholly or in part; they are uſed only as ſymbols and emblems of other things; and they may anſwer this end equally

conſtitute a proper ſymbol, emblem, or hieroglyphic of what it is deſigned to ſignify and repreſent: witneſs the *cherubim* of *Ezekiel*, chap. i. his emblematical *temple*, chap. xl. (ſee *Inquiry*, ſect. III. p. 53. 2d. ed.) *the lamb having ſeven horns, and ſeven eyes*, Rev. v. 6. and the various ſymbols and emblems of the Divinity, and thoſe in particular which conſtituted the viſion of *Micaiah*, 1 Kings xxii. 19—22. Here the Prophet ſays, *I ſaw the Lord ſitting upon his throne, and all the hoſt of heaven ſtanding by him, on his right-hand and on his left*; though God, we are certain, is without bodily parts, ſpiritual, inviſible, and omnipreſent. He then tells us, that God adviſed with the heavenly hoſt what meaſures to take; and ſome recommended one thing, ſome another, till after much deliberation, one of them hit upon an expedient, ſuch as after examination was approved by the Deity; which was that of being a lying ſpirit in the mouth of *Ahab*'s prophets. Now if you aſk, Has the devil the diſpoſal of the world? And if he has not, could he be repreſented in a divine viſion as actually having it? I alſo would inquire with the prophet of God, *Who has directed the ſpirit of the Lord? — With whom took he counſel?* Or when could he ſtand in need of advice? When did he authoriſe falſhood and lyes? The anſwer in both caſes is the ſame; neither are to be underſtood literally, or as a hiſtory of facts, but as viſions or parabolical repreſentations; and though the repreſentations are mere fictions, they convey inſtruction as truly and properly, as if they were exact copies of outward objects. *Micaiah*'s viſion was a prediction and figurative repreſentation of God's providence in ordering matters ſo as that *Ahab*, by giving credit to his own falſe prophets, who flattered his pride and prejudices, ſhould fall at *Ramoth Gilead*: juſt as the tempter's promiſe was a prophecy and preſiguration of the empire and grandeur with which Chriſt was afterwards to be tempted.

equally on any of theſe ſuppoſitions. For their propriety does not conſiſt in their being juſt pictures of real objects, but in their fitneſs to repreſent the inſtruction they contain. In the caſe before us, the appearance of the tempter to Chriſt, and his making him the promiſe of univerſal empire, was a ſymbol and emblem, not of the power of the tempter himſelf, but of the actual offer of grandeur and empire, with which Chriſt was to be tempted in the courſe of his miniſtry. And it was neceſſary that the promiſe of the world in viſion ſhould appear real; ſince otherwiſe it could not have truely repreſented the temptation he was actually expoſed to, of ſecuring the empire of the world by a different application of his miraculous powers, from that which he was appointed to make of them. So that the whole of the objection amounts to this, (which equally affects many other viſions in Scripture) that the image has no correſponding object in nature, or no exact external archetype; (a point which we have no inclination to diſpute;) while it muſt be allowed to have been a proper ſymbol of what itw as deſigned to repreſent.

If we deny, that any impreſſion can be made upon the mind by God, but ſuch as is conformable to the real nature of external objects; we condemn the conſtitution of the

world

world around us. Without entering into the philoſophy either of *Locke* or *Berkeley*, it is certain that the objects around us, (thoſe outward ſenſible ſigns, by which God is continually ſpeaking to mankind,) raiſe in us ideas and ſenſations very different from the real natures of the things themſelves. We aſcribe ſenſible qualities to objects, ſuch as heat, coldneſs, and the like; though they exiſt not in the objects, but are ſolely perceptions in the mind. How various are the aſpects of objects, according to their different diſtances, the nature of the medium, and the diſpoſition of the organ? Nor are we deceived only by thoſe falſe repreſentations, which the ſenſes make of objects to the mind; but we even miſtake thoſe images and repreſentations for the very objects themſelves; and in ſo doing, follow an univerſal and powerful inſtinct of nature. Nevertheleſs it is certain, that though external objects may have a real and abſolute exiſtence; the mind has no immediate intercourſe with them, but only (through the inlets of the ſenſes) receives the images, copies, and repreſentations of them. The objection therefore here made to *ſupernatural* viſion, equally affects *natural* viſion. If the latter be a diſpenſation not unworthy the God of truth; neither can the former. It is not, perhaps, the intention of providence, by any impreſſions it makes upon our minds, to

lead

lead us into the knowledge of the abſtract natures of things, but (more immediately and principally) to convey ſome uſeful inſtruction, ſuch as may ſerve for the direction of our conduct, to admoniſh us what to avoid, and what to purſue. In the caſe before us at leaſt, it is certain that the repreſentation of Satan in viſion, was not deſigned to give Chriſt any new information concerning the nature of Satan, becauſe here he is only an emblem and ſymbol of temptation.

If you ſtill plead, "That we may correct the errors of ſenſe by the reflections of reaſon, which enables us to judge of things, not merely as they appear at firſt, but as they really are;" the ſame anſwer is more fully applicable to the caſe in queſtion; reaſon always enabling the prophet, when the viſion is ended, to paſs a true judgment concerning the nature of it's repreſentations.

IV.

It is aſſerted in the *Inquiry*, that the proper intention of this viſion was, to predict to our Saviour his future trials; that the ſeveral ſcenes were diſtinct prophecies and ſymbols of the different temptations which were to occur in the courſe of his miniſtry, and proper premonitions againſt them. This is argued [a] from two conſiderations: the general nature of viſions as ſymbo-

[a] *Inquiry*, 1ſt ed. p. 58—60 — 2d ed. p. 75—78.

ſymbolical and prophetic; and the perfect correſpondence between the ſigns in this viſion, and the things they ſignified and repreſented.

Now though the inſtances [e] produced in the *Inquiry*, may be ſufficient to prove, that viſions in general were of an emblematical nature; yet this being a point of very great importance to the right underſtanding of this and many other paſſages of Scripture; I will confirm it by ſome further examples. That God is a ſpiritual incorporeal being, is equally the doctrine of reaſon and revelation. And therefore when we read ſo often in the prophets, that they *ſaw the Lord ſitting upon his throne* [f]; we may be certain, that they had only a mental repreſentation of ſome *ſymbol* or *emblem* of the majeſty of God [g]. Jacob's ladder ſtanding upon the earth,

[e] Firſt ed. p. 20. note [s] p. 56, 57, 63, 92 — 2d. ed. p. 29. note [b] p. 73, 74, 81, 108.

[f] 1 Kings xxii. 19. Iſ. vi. 1. Dan. vii. 9, 10. Acts vii. 55. Rev. iv. 2.

[g] Nevertheleſs, the ancients, taking every thing ſpoken of God in the Scriptures in a *literal* ſenſe, attributed to him *the figure of a man*, and maintained that he was the *object of bodily ſight*. And ſuch was the zeal with which this doctrine was maintained, that the denial of it was branded with impiety, and put men in danger of their lives. Socrat. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 6. c. 7. I take notice of this here, not only as it is a ſtriking inſtance of an abſurd adherence to the letter of Scripture; but alſo as it may ſerve to ſhew, how little regard is due to the opinions of the ancients, and that it ought to create no prejudice againſt the explication here given of Chriſt's temptation, that it is

earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels aſcending and deſcending on it, was the hieroglyphic of God's particular providence, or of his readineſs to interpoſe in an extraordinary manner in favour of the patriarch [h]. In like manner, the perſons and things which St. John ſaw in viſion, do all ſtand for other perſons and things; and had themſelves no exiſtence, but in the *imagination* of the prophet; (the Spirit of God preſenting before it all thoſe appearances and ſcenes which he deſcribes; which are therefore juſtly called *a revelation* [i].) The glorious perſonage in a human form, at whoſe feet he fell down as dead [k], was not Chriſt himſelf, but a ſymbolical repreſentation of him; and ſuch alſo was *the lamb in the midſt of the throne* [l]. *The four living creatures*, and *the four and twenty elders* [m], were not real beings, but were emblems of ſuch things as did really exiſt in nature. Sometimes an expreſs declaration is made, what the objects of the viſion repreſent: *The ſeven ſtars are the angels*

is contrary to theirs. They who could ſo far diſhonour the omnipreſent Deity, as to attribute to him a viſible and human form; would hardly ſcruple to aſcribe ſomething of this kind to the devil.

[h] Gen. xxviii. 12, 13, compare John i. 51.
[i] Rev. i. 1. [k] ch. i. 13—16.
[l] Rev. v. 6. [m] ch. iv. 4, 6.

angels of the ſeven churches, and the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt, are, i. e. ſignify and repreſent, *the ſeven churches* [n]. At other times, the viſion was not explained, and people were at a loſs to find out it's meaning and reference; as appears by that complaint of the prophet, *Ah Lord God, they ſay of me, Doth he not ſpeak parables* [o]? It can never be ſufficiently lamented, that Chriſtian divines, notwithſtanding the cleareſt evidence that viſions were merely mental illuminations, and their ſeveral ſcenes figurative and ſymbolical; do frequently ſpeak of thoſe ſcenes as deſcribing real objects and beings, ſuch as have an exiſtence in nature. The *throne of God in heaven, the worſhip paid him there by the elders* [p], and *the new Jeruſalem* [q]; which St. John ſaw and deſcribed, are too often explained in ſuch a manner as would lead one to ſuppoſe, that they contained, in part at leaſt, a deſcription of the true heaven, and the real worſhip and felicity of the righteous in it. But if theſe viſions of St. John do indeed refer to heaven at all; they are at moſt only ſymbols and emblems of it, and as ſuch perfectly diſtinct from that place or ſtate itſelf [r].

Other

[n] ch. i. 20. See Dan. viii. 20, 21. [o] Ezek. xx. 49.
[p] Rev. iv. [q] ch. xxi, xxii.
[r] The Mohammedans, when reproached with the low and ſenſual

Other undoubted examples of the ſymbolical nature of viſionary repreſentations and miraculous appearances, may be found in the paſſages referred to below[s]. I ſhall only add, that when God declares by the prophet, *I have multiplied viſions, and uſed ſimilitudes*[t]; this language ſeems to imply, that the objects of viſion were always deſigned as reſemblances and apt repreſentations of other things.

V.

The moſt plauſible objections againſt the *Inquiry*, are levelled againſt thoſe paſſages which aſſert, that Chriſt's viſion contained a preſent trial. It is alledged, "That the ſame "conſiderations which diminiſh or deſtroy the "force

ſenſual deſcriptions of paradiſe, which occur almoſt in every page of their Koran; retort theſe paſſages out of the *Revelation* of St. John, and plead their having the ſame right to have recourſe to figure and allegory, as thoſe Chriſtians who do not underſtand the forecited paſſages in a literal ſenſe. But here lies the difference: all the repreſentations in the *Revelation* of St. John, *are declared* to be *viſionary*; and therefore were deſigned to be underſtood as figurative and ſymbolical; and unleſs they are ſo underſtood, cannot be reconciled with other plain paſſages of the New Teſtament: but the Mohammedan repreſentations of paradiſe objected to by Chriſtians, *are not declared* to be viſionary and ſymbolical; and even have no conſiſtent meaning, unleſs they are literally underſtood.

[s] Gen. xv. 17. ch. xxxvii. 7, 9. Exod. iii. 2. Jer. i. 11, 13. Ezek. xxxvii. 1. Zech. i. 7, &c. ch. iv. 2—11. ch. v. 1—5. Acts xvi. 9, 10.

[t] Hoſea xii. 10.

" force of Chriſt's temptation upon the com-
" mon hypotheſis, equally affect it's force
" upon mine." If this allegation be juſt; neither of theſe hypotheſes can be true; ſince it ſerves equally for the confutation of both. We hope however to ſhew, that the allegation has no ſufficient foundation to ſupport it. In order to the right underſtanding of this ſubject, it will be neceſſary to obſerve,

1.) That the *Inquiry* [u] aſſerts this viſion to be directly and properly intended, as *a prediction and ſymbol of Chriſt's future temptations.* And againſt this view of it, no material objection has ever been urged. So that even were we to grant, that this viſion was not *probationary*; this would not affect it's proper uſe and intention as *prophetical* and *premonitory.* Though this obſervation was made in the firſt edition of the *Inquiry* [u], it was neceſſary to repeat it here; becauſe it ſeems not to have been attended to, by thoſe who make the objection we are conſidering.

2.) It is evident, that this viſion bore the *form* of a preſent trial. To the view and apprehenſion of Chriſt at the time, it contained certain alluring propoſals made to him by the devil, in order to ſolicit him to evil. And on

[u] P. 63. 1ſt ed. — p. 80, 81. 2d ed.

this account it is, that the hiſtory relates them as real temptations; and tells us, that Chriſt was carried into the wilderneſs, *that he might be tempted of the devil.* This expreſſion deſcribes the *nature of the viſion or repreſentation*; for the hiſtory of a viſion always correſponds to the views of the prophet. Chriſt likewiſe rejects the ſeveral propoſals here made to him, as ſo many temptations of the devil.

3.) This viſion, however could not be deſigned to *tempt Chriſt*, if we thereby mean, *ſoliciting* or *ſeducing* him into ſin; becauſe it had a divine author, and the ſeveral ſcenes of it were ſo framed, as to guard or warn a good mind from yielding to any of the propoſals it contained. To appearance, theſe propoſals were made by the devil in perſon; which was deſigned to awaken an immediate reſiſtance, and was a proper monition againſt a compliance.

4.) Nevertheleſs, this viſion might (I apprehend) anſwer the end of a preſent trial; that is, it might ſerve to ſhew, how Chriſt was diſpoſed to act, or to *diſcover* and *diſplay* his virtue; which is a very common meaning of the word temptation or trial in Scripture [x], and is the ſenſe in which we uſe it here, when we call

[x] Inquiry, p. 61. 1ſt ed. — p. 78, 79. 2d ed.

call Chriſt's viſion a preſent trial. The ſeveral propoſals now made to Chriſt, viz. the ſatisfying his preſent hunger by a miracle, the opening his divine commiſſion at the temple of Jeruſalem by a ſeeming deſcent from heaven, and his aſcending the throne of his father David; theſe propoſals were in *themſelves* ſo enticing, that nothing but the conſidering them as *ſinful*, or *as temptations of Satan*, could diſpoſe the moſt conſummate virtue to reject them. Chriſt's virtue therefore was evidenced and exerciſed by his rejection of theſe propoſals. His ready anſwers ſufficiently ſhew by what principles of piety he was acted; and that he conſidered the propoſals, however alluring, as temptations which were to be reſiſted. And he did accordingly reſiſt them. Theſe circumſtances rendered this viſion, though prophetic and monitory in it's frame and intention, yet in ſome degree probationary likewiſe. At the time Chriſt conſidered it as a trial, agreeably to the form it bore. When the viſion was ended, he would naturally regard it as an emblem of his future conflicts, on account of the prophetical deſign of viſionary repreſentations. The conſiſtency of theſe two views of it, may appear by conſidering, that the prophetic ſigns of Chriſt's future temptations, were ſamples of thoſe temptations: for

during the courſe of his miniſtry he was tempted to the very ſame conduct, as he was now; that is, he was urged to uſe his miraculous power for his own perſonal relief, for the more oſtentatious diſplay of his divine commiſſion, and for the acquiſition of worldly empire. There was, I own, ſome conſiderable difference in the two caſes; but not ſuch as prevented the ſigns or ſamples of Chriſt's future temptations, from giving a preſent occaſion to the diſcovery of his piety and virtue. Let us now attend to the objections; which, even ſuppoſing them to be unanſwerable, do not overthrow the main principles of the Inquiry.

VI.

It is obſerved in the *Inquiry*[y], "That the "appearance of the devil to our Saviour *in* "*perſon*, could ſerve no other end, than to "create a prejudice againſt his propoſals; and "conſequently that this circumſtance was un"ſuitable to the allowed policy of this wicked "ſpirit, who, if he wiſhed to ſucceed, would "not have urged his temptations in a manner "the moſt likely to prevent their ſucceſs, and "which could not but abate their force upon "a virtuous diſpoſition." Inſtead of anſwering this objection, ſome content themſelves with

[y] P. 5. 1ſt. ed. —— p. 7. 2d. ed.

with retorting it; by pleading, "That the *ap-*
"*prehended* preſence of Satan in viſion, would
"produce the ſame general effect, as his *real*
"preſence at any other time."

This is an obſervation which we are not at all concerned to diſpute: for though true in itſelf, it is foreign from the purpoſe. It is acknowledged, that both his apprehended and his real preſence would create upon a good mind a prejudice againſt his propoſals. And for this reaſon, it would have been impolitic in *Satan*, to have made his appearance before Chriſt either in perſon or in viſion; if he meant thereby to recommend his propoſals. But what would have been abſurd in this malignant ſpirit, whoſe buſineſs it is to *ſeduce*; was a wiſe conduct in the *Deity*, (the author of this viſion;) becauſe his intention was *to forewarn* Chriſt of his danger, and to arm him againſt it. It was on purpoſe to lead Chriſt to regard the preſent propoſals, (which were afterwards to occur in real life,) as highly criminal in their nature; that the viſion repreſented them as made to him by *the devil*, as the temptations of that great enemy of God, whom it is virtue always to reſiſt. Thus the very ſame circumſtance, the appearance of the devil, which was proper in the viſion, ſuitable both to it's divine author, and benevolent intention; would have

been abſurd upon the common hypotheſis.

It is farther urged, that the reaſonings employed to abate the force of the ſecond temptation[z], upon the common hypotheſis; do equally affect that advanced in the *Inquiry*. But let us conſider whether there be not a wide difference in the two caſes. The reaſonings here referred to, are levelled againſt the ſuppoſition, ſo commonly made by the advocates of the literal interpretation, that the devil having aſſumed a human form, and tranſported Chriſt through the air from the wilderneſs to the top of the temple, would have perſuaded him to throw himſelf down from thence; that by his miraculous preſervation he might demonſtrate his peculiar character as the Son of God. And the objection advanced in the Inquiry againſt this hypotheſis, is, that Chriſt could not but eaſily diſcern, that a compliance with this propoſal might not anſwer the end propoſed by it, and might poſſibly iſſue in his diſhonour; ſince the devil, who had already in a miraculous manner placed him upon the temple, might alſo by a ſimilar act of power have thrown himſelf down from thence, in the human form which he then wore, without receiving any injury; and thus deſtroyed the credit of the miracle

[z] *Inquiry*, 1ſt ed. p. 5, 6, 7. —— 2d ed. p. 7—9.

miracle, by which Jeſus was to have eſtabliſhed his divine miſſion. The view with which this objection was made, was to ſhew, that this hypotheſis of our adverſaries is inconſiſtent with the allowed policy of Satan, who would ſcarce have made a propoſal, which Chriſt could have no inducement to comply with, and which (though alluring in itſelf, yet) under theſe peculiar circumſtances he would conſider rather as an indignity, than a temptation. But what relation has this objection to any thing advanced in the *Inquiry?* Is it aſſerted there, that the repreſentations of the viſion correſponded to this hypotheſis; that the repreſentative figure of the apoſtate angel, in particular, was a *human form?* or does the hiſtory aſſert or intimate this? or determine in what manner Chriſt was impreſſed with an apprehenſion of his preſence? The objection under conſideration ariſes entirely from a ſuppoſed ſtate of things, which the hiſtory does not countenance; to which therefore the repreſentations of the viſion might bear no reſemblance, and which might not leave room for an apprehenſion, that in caſe Chriſt had thrown himſelf down from the temple, the devil might have done the ſame. And ſo far as the repreſentations were different from this ſuppoſed ſtate of things, they were not liable to the ſame

objection. In order to determine what the repreſentations really were, we muſt look into the hiſtory: for whatever is there related as matter of fact, *that* appeared to the mind of Chriſt as ſuch. Now all that the hiſtory relates, is, the attempt of the devil to perſuade Chriſt, whom he had placed upon the temple, to throw himſelf down from thence, in a dependence upon God for his preſervation, and to ſatisfy the Jews at once that he was the Meſſiah. In this *ſingle* view the propoſal was made and conſidered. And it was very inviting in it's own nature [a]; but a compliance with it would have been criminal; and therefore it was virtuouſly rejected. And it could be with no other view, than to lead Chriſt to conceive of it as criminal and fit to be rejected, that the viſion repreſents the propoſal as made by Satan. So that thoſe who make this objection, do not appear to have attended either to the true nature of the viſion, or to the deſign of it's author.

VII.

It was obſerved in the *Inquiry* [b], that the offer of all the kingdoms of the world, upon the common interpretation, carried no force; becauſe

[a] Firſt ed. p. 74, 75—2d ed. p. 90, 91.
[b] P. 7. 1ſt ed.——p. 9—11. 2d ed.

cauſe Chriſt could not but know, that the devil who made it, had no power to make it good. Now this objection, it is ſaid, holds likewiſe againſt the offer in viſion; if it be true, as has been all along aſſerted, that the repreſentations of a viſion paſs for real objects, and produce the ſame effects as if they were. "What difference then," it is aſked, "with "regard to Chriſt, could it make, whether he "had a *real ſight* of the devil, or a *viſionary* "*repreſentation* of him, when he made him "this offer?"

Thoſe who rely on this objection, ſeem to me not to attend to the wide difference which there is, between judging the images or appearances of a viſion to be real objects; and their having exact external archetypes. A viſion may conſiſt, either of ſuch appearances as are perfect repreſentations or copies of objects really exiſting in nature; or of ſuch as bear little or no correſpondence to thoſe objects: as we have fully ſhewn [c]. And in either caſe, the appearances equally paſs for realities. Our Saviour might have had a viſion of Satan, perfectly conformable to his true nature, or (which ſeems to have been the caſe) a repreſentation of him with powers which he did not poſſeſs [d]. And the

[c] Appendix, N°. III. note [d]

[d] Juſt as St. John, inſtead of repreſentation of a *lamb*, agreable

the latter view of him would make the ſame impreſſions as the former; it being the nature of viſion to give a ſeeming reality to all the objects of it, whether they have external archetypes or not. They appear to poſſeſs all the powers and properties, with which they are repreſented [e]. From hence it follows, that ſo far as the repreſentation of the devil in this viſion, was different [f] from his true nature; ſo far it muſt make a difference with regard to Chriſt, whether he had a real ſight or a viſionary repreſentation of him. In the former caſe, the third temptation had no force, becauſe Chriſt knew the devil had no power to diſpoſe of the kingdoms of the world; in the latter, if this power be a part of the repreſentation, the ſame objection cannot take place.

Now that this power did belong to the repreſentation made of him to Chriſt, ſeems probable from ſeveral conſiderations. 1ſt. Becauſe the hiſtory (which never deſcribes any thing as a fact,

able to the common animals of that ſpecies, had a repreſentation of one with ſeven horns, and ſeven eyes. See the note laſt referred to.

[e] *Inquiry*, p. 82. 1ſt ed.——p. 97, 98. 2d ed.

[f] It is admitted, that when the internal repreſentation is exactly conformable to any outward object, (which was the caſe of Saul when he ſaw Ananias, Act. ix. 12.) there is no difference with regard to the impreſſion they make upon the mind, between it's diſcerning the object and the repreſentation.

a fact, but what appears to the mind of the prophet as ſuch, during his viſion,) relates as matter of fact the promiſe or offer of the world made to Chriſt by the devil; which could not therefore but appear to be real, every repreſentation of a viſion paſſing for a real object. If the devil had not appeared to Chriſt to poſſeſs the powers he claimed; Chriſt could not have ſeemed to himſelf to have had any offer or promiſe at all; which neceſſarily ſuppoſe a power to make them good. 2dly, At the ſame time that the devil made Chriſt the *offer*, he gave him a *ſight* of all the kingdoms of the world. And Chriſt could no more doubt of the certainty of the former, than of the latter. 3dly, His anſwer expreſſes, not any *diſbelief* or *doubt* about the reality of the offer, but his abhorrence of the thought of *accepting* it. And therefore the ſame conſideration which deſtroys the force of the third temptation upon the common hypotheſis; does not affect the ſuppoſition of it's being propoſed in viſion.

VIII.

But it is ſtill aſked, "Might not Chriſt "have examined into the foundation of the "devil's claim to the diſpoſal of the world; "ſince it is allowed that the viſion did not de-"prive him of the exerciſe of his underſtand-"ing?" Chriſt was prevented from ſuch examination

amination, not ſo much by the momentary duration of the viſion, as by the very nature of it's impreſſion, which takes away all ſuſpicion concerning it's own reality. For otherwiſe, the objects of a viſion would not even *ſeem* to be real.

If it be farther inquired, "How far was "the mind *paſſive*, and how far was it *free* in "it's exerciſe, under the impreſſions of a vi-"ſion? Ought not a line to have been drawn, "to ſhew where it's conſtraint ended, and "where it's liberty began?" I anſwer, this line has been already drawn. It has been ſhewn[g], 1ſt, That the prophet was altogether *paſſive in receiving the impreſſions of a viſion*; juſt as we are paſſive in receiving the impreſſions made by external objects themſelves, and the ideas they raiſe in the mind. Here then the prophet had no liberty; he could not alter his views and perſuaſions concerning the objects of his viſion, the impreſſion being made by a hand too ſtrong to be reſiſted. 2dly, It is alſo ſhewn[h], that *in every other reſpect the prophet*

[g] P. 54, 55. 1ſt ed.—p. 72. 2d. ed.

[h] P. 55—58. 1ſt ed.—p. 72—75. 2d ed. What is here offered, will enable us to form a judgment concerning what is advanced by Spanheim, (Dubia Evangel. dub. 55. pars III. p. 242, 243.) Ille enim proprié tentari dicitur, qui ſui compos eſt, & in ejuſmodi ſtatu in quo & judicio uti poteſt, & libertate volun-

prophet had the free uſe of his underſtanding : and therefore was as capable of a rational determination and choice, with reſpect to the objects of his viſion, as thoſe of bodily ſight. From theſe premiſes, we may draw this concluſion ; that though Chriſt could not alter his view of the tempting propoſals or of the other repreſentations which were now made to his mind ; (could not, for example, doubt the reality of the ſight or offer of the world, which the devil appeared to give him,) any more than he could change the appearance of external objects ; yet in reſiſting theſe propoſals, he might exerciſe his underſtanding, and evidence the pious diſpoſition of his heart.

IX.

The only remaining objection which we are to examine, is this ; " That by ſetting the dif-
" ficulties attending the literal interpretation of
" this hiſtory in ſo ſtrong a light ; we give
" too much advantage to infidelity [i]."

I leave

voluntatis ; in viſione verò nec judicii nec voluntatis exercitium propriè ſic dictum, adeoque nec aſſenſus propriè nec diſſenſus. From the *inſtances* cited in the paſſages of the Inquiry referred to in the beginning of this note, it appears, that viſion did not diſturb either the underſtanding or paſſions of the prophet.

[i] This objection is in ſome meaſure obviated in the *Inquiry*, p. 1, 30, 31. of the 1ſt edition ; and p. 1, 45. of the 2d. ed.

I leave it to thoſe who urge the objection, to reconcile it either with an ardent love of truth, which naturally dictates the moſt impartial ſcrutiny into every ſubject; or with an honourable opinion of Chriſtianity: a religion which diſdains the arts of worldly policy; and nobly conſcious of the validity of it's claims, ſubmits it's doctrines and credentials to univerſal inſpection, invites and demands a rigorous examination. The timidity and policy from which this objection proceeds, would, I apprehend, have prevented our forefathers, (had they been under the influence of ſuch principles,) from expoſing the abſurdity of any generally received opinion, founded upon the letter of Scripture. The common people, even to this day, muſt have entertained ſuch groſs conceptions of the Deity, as can not be mentioned without horror [k]. And proteſtants muſt have ſpared that monſter, tranſubſtantiation. But they never failed to expoſe it's abſurdities, from a full perſuaſion, that however it may be favoured by the *letter*, it is certainly contrary to the true *ſenſe*, of Scripture. And they conſidered every objection againſt the literal meaning, as a reaſon for adopting a different interpretation. With regard to the hiſtory of our Saviour's temptation; there was a neceſſity for urging

[k] Appendix N°. IV. note ε.

urging the objections againſt the received expoſition, in order to prepare men to embrace that which is offered in it's ſtead. And in taking this natural method, I had the whole world before me for a precedent, in caſes of the like kind. Nor can Chriſtianity ſuffer any prejudice by this manner of proceeding: for if the objections urged againſt the hiſtory of Chriſt's temptation are groundleſs, they may eaſily be refuted: and if they are well ſupported, they conclude only againſt the literal interpretation; it being a rule univerſally allowed in the interpretation of all authors, never to affix any ſenſe to their words, which is either abſurd in itſelf, or manifeſtly repugnant to their avowed principles, if they are fairly capable of a more rational and conſiſtent meaning. Nor is there any room in the caſe before us to ſuggeſt, that we have had recourſe to a figurative explication from mere neceſſity, and only to avoid the ſeeming abſurdity of the literal one: for we have produced many circumſtances of the hiſtory to evince, that the ſacred writers themſelves did not and could not deſign to be underſtood literally. Nay, all the evangeliſts have, in expreſs terms, declared the whole to be a *ſpiritual* and mental tranſaction; and this is proved without offering any violence to their words, or affixing any ſenſe to them,

but

but what they are *allowed to bear in other parts of Scripture*; and what their connexion and other circumſtances neceſſarily require in this. Laſtly, the evidence of it's being a viſion, is much ſtrengthened, by the rational and wiſe intentions of ſuch a prophetic repreſentation, as a prediction and forewarning of thoſe ſevere trials, to which Chriſt was afterwards to be expoſed. Till the reaſoning on theſe ſeveral points is confuted, I ſhall not be without ſome faint hope, that inſtead of furniſhing new prejudices againſt the Goſpel, I have removed old ones. With this view at leaſt the argument was undertaken; and from a full perſuaſion, that if Chriſtianity was ſtripped of all diſguiſes, and ſhewn in her native ſimplicity and beauty, juſt as ſhe deſcended from heaven; it would obviate at once all objections to her divine origin.

FINIS.

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